

ANALYZING CITY IMAGES POTENTIALS OF THE “FRENCH SCHOOL OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS”

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With 3 figures

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Summary: Discourse theoretical concepts and poststructuralist approaches have widely been discussed within German human geography in recent years. They argue that language plays a decisive role for the constitution of social realities in general and the formation of power-knowledge structures in particular. However, the question of how these theoretical insights could adequately be implemented in empirical studies has remained a matter of ongoing debate especially as the assumptions underlying the methods of qualitative social research have been criticized by poststructuralist thinkers. This paper draws on writings of the “French School of Discourse Analysis” (WILLIAMS 1999) in order to develop a methodical mix of quantitative-statistical and proposition-based techniques that is able to address the meaning effects derived from the formal characteristics of texts. Using a print media analysis of the city image of Leipzig as an empirical example, the potential that this approach has for the depiction of both structural aspects of discourses as well as inconsistencies and conflicts within them is discussed.

Zusammenfassung: Diskurstheoretische Konzepte und poststrukturalistische Ansätze sind in der deutschsprachigen Humangeographie in den letzten Jahren intensiv diskutiert worden. Sie argumentieren, dass Sprache eine entscheidende Rolle für die Konstitution sozialer Wirklichkeiten im Allgemeinen und die Etablierung von Macht-Wissen-Strukturen im Besonderen spielt. Gleichwohl ist die Frage, wie diese theoretischen Erkenntnisse angemessen in empirischen Studien operationalisiert werden können, Gegenstand intensiver Debatten, insbesondere, weil viele der Grundannahmen der qualitativen Sozialforschung von poststrukturalistischen Autorinnen und Autoren kritisiert wurden. Der Aufsatz entwickelt mit Rückgriff auf die Arbeiten der „Französischen Schule der Diskursanalyse“ (WILLIAMS 1999) einen methodischen Mix aus quantitativ-statistischen und aussagenanalytischen Verfahren. Dieser ist in der Lage, Bedeutung als Effekt der formalen Charakteristika von Texten zu untersuchen. Am empirischen Beispiel einer Printmedienanalyse des Stadtimages von Leipzig werden die Potentiale dieses Ansatzes für die Analyse der strukturellen Merkmale von Diskursen sowie für deren Inkonsistenzen und innere Widersprüche diskutiert.

Keywords: French School of Discourse Analysis, methodical implementation, lexicometry, proposition analysis

1 Introduction¹⁾

With a growing reception of structuralist and poststructuralist theories within German human geography, different discourse analytical approaches are increasingly being discussed within the discipline. These approaches have problematized a variety of concepts that belong to the theoretical as well as methodological inventory of human geography as, for example, autonomous subjects and their intentions, spatial structures and spatial collective identities (national states, regions etc.). These notions are obviously not suddenly becoming unimportant or irrelevant but rather the perspective is changing. From the point of view of structuralist and poststructur-

alist theories, the question is not how subjectivities, intentions, identities and spatial structures shape human actions but rather, how these phenomena are discursively constituted, which alternatives are thereby marginalized and which power structures are established.²⁾

²⁾ Concepts such as the autonomous subject, collective identities and spatial structures have also to different degrees been criticized by other theories. In particular the idea of objectively given spatial structures has been the focus of numerous critiques within human geography e.g. from the perspective of actor oriented approaches (WERLEN 1987) and systems theory (LIPPUNER 2005; POTT 2007; REDEPENNING 2006), with the latter also agreeing to the idea that social structures are constitutive for the formation of social actors. Within the context of these “constructivist” approaches, discourse theory holds a special focus on the processes of identification and identity formation as well as power relations.

¹⁾ The work toward the research presented here was supported by the European Social Fund in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

The majority of discourse theories agree that *language* plays a vital role in the constitution of social reality. Through language meanings are generated and transported, conflicts around different interpretations are played out and the processes of identification and separation take place.³⁾ But how precisely does this work, and how can these phenomena be scientifically observed? Constructivist approaches in human geography have been traditionally dominated by methods of qualitative social research and the interpretation of the empirical data (usually interview transcripts and texts) often followed a hermeneutic understanding of textual analysis. Although the idea of a gradual convergence of perceptions and ideas underlying these approaches has been widely criticized in discourse theories (FOUCAULT 1973; LACAN 1973; LACLAU and MOUFFE 1985), they often offer few insights as to how the characteristics of discourses and structures of meaning production can empirically be revealed. The following article proposes a mixture of macro- and micro-methods of language analysis following the “French School of Discourse Analysis” (WILLIAMS 1999), which attempts to fill this methodological gap by interpreting the implications for the constitution of meanings emanating from the formal characteristics of texts. This approach integrates quantitative, statistical methods with qualitative components in order to represent the structural features of discourses as well as their inconsistencies and inner conflicts.

In line with this approach, the theoretical assumptions of discourse theories are briefly sketched in the following and their implications for methodology and method are discussed. The focus is then placed on the methodical aspects of discourse analysis, in which the different methods of the “French School of Discourse Analysis” are explained and

³⁾ Most discourse theories agree that structures of meaning production involve not only language, but also other aspects as seen in particular practices, institutions and material elements (LACLAU and MOUFFE 1985; FOUCAULT 1973). However, most methodical implementations of discourse theories have focused so far on the analysis of language, because language is considered to play a vital role in the connection of these different elements. Although prominent claims have been made within the last years to include non-linguistic elements in discourse analyses (e.g. BÜHRMANN and SCHNEIDER 2008), these attempts have so far failed to provide methodical instruments for empirical implementations. Language centered discourse analyses on the contrary can draw on a wide range of methods that have been developed in linguistics. For these reasons, the following article will focus on methods of text analysis and their potential for the implementation of discourse theories..

their potential for empirical research within human geography is demonstrated through an example.

2 Basic principles of discourse theories

Even though discourse theory does not comprise a monolithic concept but rather a variety of different theoretical approaches, some basic assumptions and foci of analysis which are shared by the vast majority of discourse theories can be identified. These assumptions are grounded in structuralist and poststructuralist thought as explicated by authors such as BUTLER 1990, FOUCAULT 1971, 1973, 2006a⁴⁾, 2006b, LACAN 1973, LACLAU and MOUFFE 1985 and PÊCHEUX 1983 and can be summarized as follows:

- *Constitutive role of language and linguistic practices.* Discourse theories assume that social reality is not pre-discursively given but rather continuously reproduced in linguistic and other symbolic practices.
- *Contingency of social reality.* This implies that power structures, narratives and identity constructions within society are not objectively or essentially given, but socially constructed and thus in principle open to change.
- *Critique of the autonomous subject.* Unlike actor-based approaches individuals are not understood as more or less autonomous subjects with specific intentions and capabilities. Rather, it is stressed that actors are not only embedded in social power structures that confine and enable actions, but that even the intentions and goals of individuals are grounded in historically and socio-culturally specific maps of meaning. Accordingly, the aim of the analysis shifts from asking how identities shape actions to the question, to how identity is constructed in discursive processes in the first place.
- *Critique of the idea of objectively given spatial structures.* In analogy to social reality in general, spatial patterns of human actions are also understood as contingent, i.e. not as following abstract rules and inner logics, but instead as changeable and unstable outcomes of social beliefs, norms and power structures that are established (and institutionalized) at a given point in time.

⁴⁾ Foucault presented his thoughts on the “history of governmentality” during his lectures at the Collège de France in the years 1977 and 1978. However, these lectures were not published until 2004 when the first publications were simultaneously released in French and German (the German paperback version referenced here was first published in 2006). The first English translation of the lectures became available in 2009.

- *Power analysis.* The analysis of power structures, especially the connections between the production of knowledge and truth on the one hand and power on the other, forms an integral part of discourse analyses. Hence discourse theory is always decisively political – it is about laying open the contingency of presumably objectively given power structures and thus opening possibilities for change and new interpretations. For empirical research in human geography this results in the claim to question the spatial structures and identities, to reveal their underlying premises and conditions and to reveal the alternative perspectives and practices that are marginalized by them.

Beyond the concerns and premises that are very broadly depicted here, a whole range of different theoretical positions and priorities can be identified within individual discourse theories (ANGERMÜLLER 2001; GLASZE and MATTISSEK 2009; KELLER 2004; MATTISSEK 2007a; MATTISSEK and REUBER 2004). Within German-speaking social sciences in general and human geography in particular, approaches that position themselves more closely to action theories (JÄGER 2001; KELLER 2005) can be distinguished from those which argue strictly from a structuralist or poststructuralist perspective. Unlike the former, the latter of these theoretical stances mark a clear change of perspectives when compared to qualitative social research and will thus in the following be discussed in more detail with respect to their methodological and methodical implications (ANGERMÜLLER 2005; MATTISSEK and REUBER 2004).

Although those approaches share a common interest for the rules of social knowledge, truth and power structures, they vary with respect to the conceptualization of discursive structures:

- *Structuralist positions* predominantly aim to depict *regularities* in the patterns of thinking, acting and language production on the supra-individual level. These works often refer as their theoretical reference to the “early FOUCAULT” (1971, 1973), who analyzed historic formations of knowledge and truth. However, these writings tend to remain static in the sense that they blank out the question, by which dynamics and inconsistencies discourses are characterized.
- In contrast, *poststructuralist positions* are focused precisely on discovering fissures and contradictions within discourses. They argue that discursive structures can never ultimately be fixed and accordingly, the rules of meaning production within society can never be deterministic (LACAN 1973; LACLAU 2005; LACLAU and MOUFFE 1985). Rather

those points within discursive structures, at which meaning is not clearly definable, are especially interesting for the analysis, since they show the limits of discursive (power-)structures and since at these points of indecisiveness possibilities for resistance against existing structures exist (BHABHA 1994; HALL 1994).

The empirical implementation of structuralist and poststructuralist theories poses the following methodological and methodical question: How can supra-individually shared patterns of meaning as well as fissures and contradictions be “found” within discourse, especially those that the researcher does not expect to be relevant from the outset. The task is therefore to develop methodological and methodical operationalizations which allow the detection and analysis of discursive structures and regularities as well as heterogeneities and ambiguities.

In the following, a mix of methods of both quantitative, lexicometric techniques and approaches addressing the micro-level of singular propositions which have been developed in the context of the “French School of Discourse Analysis” (WILLIAMS 1999) will be presented. The strength of this approach lies in its focus on the formal and factual observable features of texts (thus increasing its controllability) as opposed to methods of qualitative social sciences that attempt to directly tackle the meaning structures of texts. Using findings from an empirical example it will be demonstrated, why this combination of methods is particularly useful for the operationalization of (post-)structuralist theories.

3 The “French School of Discourse Analysis”

Largely unnoticed by the English and German-speaking discussions a broad debate has developed in France over the last 40 years dealing with questions of how to empirically implement discourse theories. Such discussions have generated propositions for methods on both the macro as well as micro level of language analysis (ANGERMÜLLER 2007; DZUDZEK et al. 2009; MATTISSEK 2008, 2009; WILLIAMS 1999). The fact that these approaches have rarely been received outside of France can be explained by translation issues on the one hand, but also with the dominant positioning of French discourse theoretical perspectives within linguistics (as opposed to social sciences and humanities in the English and German-speaking context). In the following the potential of this linguistically inspired approach, which focuses on the observable features of texts, will be discussed

with respect to its usefulness for studies within social sciences in general and human geography in particular.

3.1 Lexicometry – quantitative-statistical analysis of large text corpora

The aim of lexicometric approaches is to depict the structural characteristics of discourses that appear in the regularities of language use, i.e. linguistic patterns and combinations that are not only used by particular individuals but are common to a large number of speech acts of different people. This objective is grounded in the assumption that associations and connections that are characteristic for the structures of meanings, values and power relations within society are mirrored by the properties of large text corpora. For example, how spatial entities are linguistically associated with and thus characterized by certain notions (MATTISSEK 2007b, 2008) or how rationalities of spatial political actions change over time (GLASZE 2007) can be analyzed.

Lexicometry belongs to the methods of corpus linguistics, i.e. it describes the linguistic regularities of a text corpus that has been collected using specific criteria. Lexicometric methods use quantitative operations and statistical evidence to inform their conclusions. With the help of systematic comparisons and the calculation of similarities between different sub-corpora (e.g. comparisons over time), even discursive phenomena that the researcher would not have been able to discover through the mere use of reading and interpretation due to large quantities of text, can be revealed. Furthermore, the quantitative description of the corpus constitutes a tool for analysis, which integrates a certain amount of intersubjective verifiability into empirical research which is commonly associated with analyses in the tradition of Popper's Critical Rationalism. This renders obsolete criticisms which have argued that discourse analytical approaches would only make very general and hardly verifiable claims about "the discourse". Rather, lexicometric methods allow even for the disclosure of linguistic patterns, which the researcher was not explicitly searching for in the beginning. Therefore, these operations are able to satisfy one of the main demands of discourse analysis: to lay open processes of knowledge and truth production (which in turn contribute to the constitution of social structures) that *implicitly* underlie (linguistic) actions but are not necessarily consciously reflected by individuals in their daily (linguistic) practices.

The most important tool of lexicometry is the analysis of the different characteristics of individual sub-corpora. This is realized by determining the accumulation of certain words and notions in specific contexts, e.g. in linguistic proximity to names of cities or nations, the determination of so called *collocations* or *co-occurrences*. Within linguistics, such words that appear with each other more frequently than on average are denoted as collocations or co-occurrences. Their determination serves to detect the semantic contexts in which words and combinations of words are placed, in order to gain information over the discursive constitution of meanings (cf. SCHERER 2006).

In empirical practice the corpus is therefore divided into different sub-corpora (e.g. time intervals, area of investigation etc.) in order to compare the empirically determined frequencies of words within the individual sub-corpora using a lexicometric software program. In the context of human geographic research this can be used to determine which topics are regularly associated with certain spatial entities or which linguistic references prove to be important in different contexts.

The identification and evaluation of these collocations is realized using a statistical test. For this purpose, the probability that an observed accumulation of words would occur by mere chance is determined, i.e. the test is grounded in the null hypothesis that the distribution of words to the individual sub-corpora is purely contingent and does not follow any specific pattern. Under this null hypothesis the likelihood of a given empirical observation of clusters of words in the sub-corpora can be determined. Thereby, the parameter "ced" (characteristic element diagnostic) is used as a measure for the improbability of a given observation, the larger the parameter, the less likely it is that a given accumulation of words is merely due to chance. (LEBART et al. 1998, 130f.)⁵⁾

The following graph shows the result of such a lexicometric analysis. In the context of a project dealing with city images and city marketing in the three German cities of Frankfurt/Main, Cologne and Leipzig, those words that appeared significantly

⁵⁾ The statistical test deployed here is based on a hypergeometric distribution. The parameter ced specifies under this distribution the negative tenth exponent of the likelihood that the observed distribution is accidentally realized, the higher the exponent, the less likely the observed distribution. LEBART et al. point out that the calculated values cannot be directly interpreted as "probabilities" but rather, are of a descriptive nature because testing for the preconditions of the hypergeometric distribution (independency of the sample etc.) often poses problems (cf. LEBART et al. 1998, 130).

more often in texts dealing with one of the three cities than in the rest of the corpus were determined.⁶⁾ For this purpose, all articles from three international newspapers and magazines that were published between 1999 and 2005, which contained the words "city" and "Frankfurt/Main" or "Cologne" or "Leipzig" within a distance of no more than 10 words, were chosen and integrated into a combined text corpus (MATTISSEK 2008).⁷⁾

The analysis shows that Frankfurt/Main is discursively closely associated with topics of international business such as investment, economy, global and profit. Leipzig on the other hand is linked to terms that refer to economic problems such as unemployment and subsidies. In contrast, economic topics are generally underrepresented in Cologne (ibid.) (Fig. 1).

These results give valuable hints towards relevant topics in the research areas but obviously do not allow for conclusions about the specific type of relation that is constructed between cities and certain associations. Accordingly, the results of such a quan-

titative analysis need to be further developed and interpreted. In the example used above this could be accomplished through closer analysis of singular text passages in order to determine whether a given association, e.g. between "Leipzig" and "subsidies" or between "Frankfurt/Main" and "profit" is positively or negatively connoted. Whether relations of equivalence and affiliation or of demarcation and exclusion are established between important keywords that have been identified using lexicometric methods also must be clarified. These questions can be addressed by the micro-analysis of propositions that will be explained in the following.

3.2 The analysis of enunciations – revealing the relations between text and context

In order to accomplish an understanding of the different meanings being constituted in specific contexts, it is necessary to include in this study an in-depth analysis of singular texts. Following the

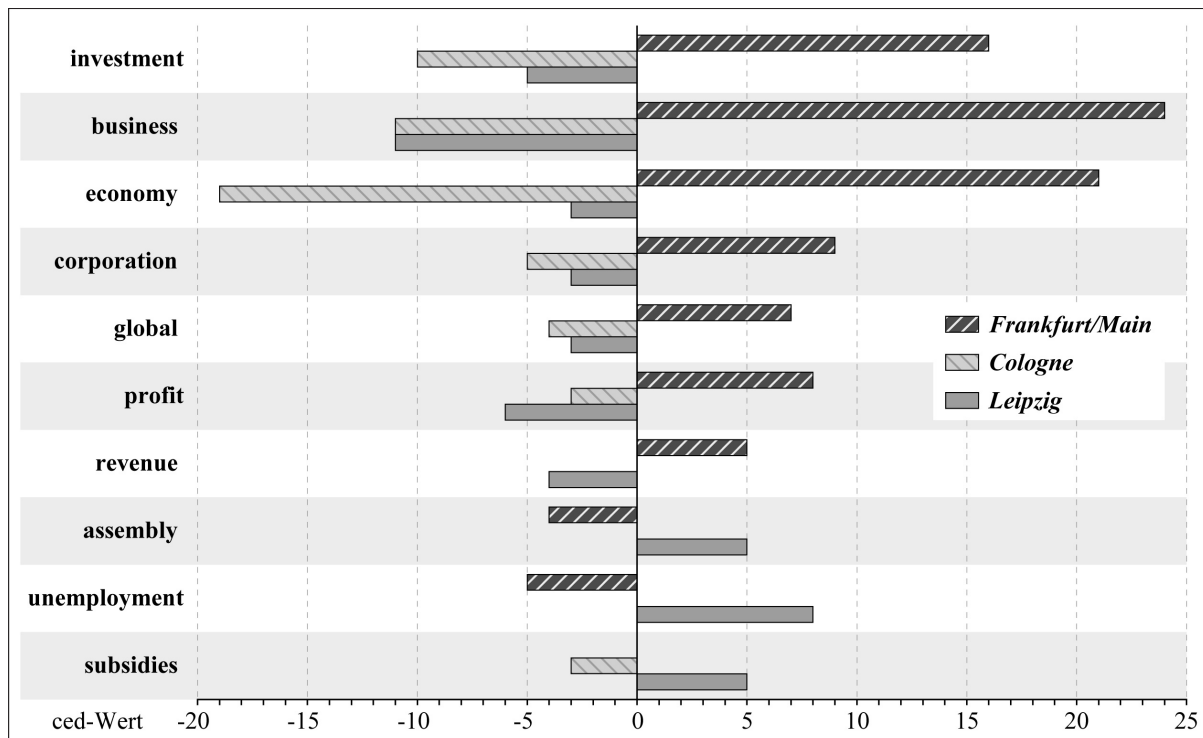


Fig. 1: Characteristic collocations with Frankfurt/Main, Cologne and Leipzig

⁶⁾ The software used for the analysis is lexico3.

⁷⁾ The total number of words within the corpus is 525,715.

methodological reasoning of the French School of Discourse Analysis, it is nevertheless necessary to not only turn to a hermeneutic understanding when moving to the micro-analysis. Rather it suggests a methodically controlled way of analyzing the con-

stitution of meanings as well as their ambiguities and inconsistencies that is closely connected to the observable linguistic features of the texts, the analysis of enunciations.

The analysis of enunciations seeks to determine how meaning is constituted in texts and which rules these processes of signification follow. This is based on the assumption that “the meaning” of texts is not something that is objectively and invariably given. In particular it is not independent of the spatial, temporal and social contexts of the production and reception of written or spoken language, but instead is constantly re-produced in the changing connections between text and context. How exactly these connections are established is not completely contingent, but rather are defined by the linguistic features of texts. For example, words like “here” or “us” contain instructions for the reader that send him/her on the search for the particular outer-linguistic references for these notions and in this sense establish a connection to the respective context (i.e., which place, which group of persons is meant by “here” and “us”?) (ANGERMÜLLER 2007).

In order to reveal the patterns of the constitution of meanings that determine the possible interpretations of enunciations, the analysis turns to those linguistic forms of expression, that establish connections between text and context or to those, that point to alternative perspectives within the discourse.

In the following, two methods of enunciative analysis will be explained in more detail that accomplish these tasks:

- The first method is the analysis of deictic expressions. It is used to comprehend how links between text and context are established and is particularly suited to understanding processes of the linguistic constitution of spatial identities.
- The second method is the analysis of polyphonic expressions, which serves to reveal inconsistencies and conflicts within the discourse.

3.2.1 Deictic expressions

The first form of linguistic expressions that connect an enunciation to its external context are the deictic terms, e.g. “I”, “here” and “now”. These reflect the enunciation by referring to the person, time and place of a statement (BÜHLER 1934; WILLIAMS 1999). Through this reference function, each deictic expression incorporates a double meaning that distinguishes it from lexical

terms: The first one is a general meaning, e.g., “I” denotes the sender and “you” the receiver of a message and “here” is used to designate the location from which a proposition is uttered. The second, specific meaning on the other hand can only be determined through the inclusion of the spatial, temporal and social context, i.e., which person or place is denominated by the deictic expressions. Words such as “window” or “tulip” (lexical terms) on the other hand, can be exactly defined and allow for an empirical identification of items that are described as “windows” or “tulips” (MAINGUENEAU 2000, 18).

The primary deictic expressions (“I”, “here” and “now”) can be complemented by a number of other reference words that can be distinguished into pronouns of person that directly depend on the context of enunciation (“us”, “you” or “our”, etc.) and pronouns of person that refer to a wider textual context (“he”, “she” or “somebody”, etc.). Proper names, both of persons (“Michel Foucault”) as well as of places (“Heidelberg”, “Germany”) constitute a third, “absolute” way of referencing, because they are conventionally connected to an object (ANGERMÜLLER 2007, 120).

With the help of deictic terms, subjectivity is constructed in terms insofar that the usage of these particles allows the speakers to leave their “subjective imprint” within language (ANGERMÜLLER 2007, 122). Spatial and temporal references are organized in analogy: Temporal adverbs such as “yesterday”, “last year” or “soon” and spatializations such as “near”, “far” or “behind” require a reference to a certain point of time, respectively, a place, in order to adopt a (temporarily fixed) meaning within a given discursive context.

One possible adaptation of such an analysis of deictic expressions within human geography is the study of discursively constituted spatial identities. These are usually established linguistically by connecting personal pronouns such as “we”/“us” and “they”/“them” with spatial references such as “here” and “there” (e.g., in the fictitious statement “We here in the city of Leipzig are proud of our historical past because we played a central role in the Peaceful Revolution that led to the re-unification of Germany”). In this way it can be explained how the domains of “own” and “other” are constituted in texts and with which characteristics they are associated, and thus how processes of classification and demarcation are constantly reproduced in language (MATTISSEK 2007b).

3.2.2 The analysis of the polyphony of statements

The analysis of deictics allows coping with the heterogeneity of meanings of enunciations insofar that they have to be connected to ever new and changing discursive contexts and thus new meanings are constantly constituted. Another approach which deals with the plurality of interpretations of texts is the analysis of the polyphonic structure of enunciations. This method does not understand inconsistencies and ambiguities as the necessary result of the interactions between text and context but rather as already inscribed in singular text passages.

The analysis of the polyphonic structure of texts traces back to DUCROT (1984). Following DUCROT, within a given statement, not only one but a whole variety of voices are present that are kept at different distances with the help of particles such as “not”, “rather”, “but” and “maybe”. These connecting particles hold a vital position within texts because they install statements in an argumentative relation to each other (ANGERMÜLLER 2007, 128). For example the (notional) statement that could be found within Leipzig’s city marketing “the ‘New Laender’ (new federal states) continue to need support in the future, but it is important that no permanent dependency is established” operates with interrelated parts that each contain (linguistically necessary!) implications:

- “The ‘New Laender’ (new federal states) continue to need support”
 - Implication: The “New Laender” already receive support.
- “It is important that no permanent dependency is established”
 - Implication: There is a risk that a permanent dependency will be established.

Both parts of the statement are uttered in the form of a declaration, i.e., are linguistically presented as “true”. However, the first statement is modified by the limitation expressed in the second one where a greater distance is constructed to statement a) than to statement b). Further, within the second part of the statement (“It is important that no permanent dependency is established”) the negation contains a hint towards another discursive position, which points to the danger that a permanent dependency could evolve. In other words, the position favoring further support of the “New Laender” made in the first part of the statement, cannot be expressed without implic-

itly acknowledging that there are other opinions on this topic that are so dominant that they “slip into” the statement as competing interpretations.

Statements of one and the same person can thus contain a whole variety of voices and perspectives that mutually support, contradict and challenge each other, subtleties that a purely quantitative analysis could never discover. By pointing out that seemingly singular statements can be the arena for many different and competing points of view, Ducrot makes it clear that “the meaning” of texts and even sentences cannot be reduced to one homogeneous and consistent content (ANGERMÜLLER 2007, 129).

Therefore, the analysis of the polyphonic structure of statements seems to be particularly well suited to the study of discursive situations in which conflicts about symbolic meanings take place or in which ambiguities and inconsistencies are present or in other words: to integrate the poststructuralist dimensions of discourse into the analysis. This can be the case, for instance, in human geographic research when conflicts over different forms of regionalization occur or when one attempts to associate qualities with a given city or region that are not part of their hegemonic representation. As demonstrated below, in these cases, inconsistencies and fissures often show in a cumulative occurrence of negating terms (“but”, “not”, “instead”) as well as in a variety of adjectives and verbs that include a negation (“unnecessary”, “doubtless”, “undeserved”).

The depicted strategies for the analysis of the structural and poststructural dimensions of discourses will be explained in the remaining part of the paper with the help of the Frankfurt/Main, Cologne and Leipzig city image case study mentioned above. Using the case study of Leipzig it will be explicated, how territorializations and attributions to the city are discursively constituted, with which normative valuations these ascriptions are associated and how the methods of lexicometry and the analysis of enunciations can be used to identify both the structural components of the discursive constitution of the city as well as their ambivalences and permanent contestations.⁸⁾

⁸⁾ Due to a lack of space only the case study of Leipzig will be discussed in the following. However it is important to keep in mind for the interpretation that the quantitative results were obtained from a comparative analysis using the three cities named above (Frankfurt/Main, Cologne and Leipzig).

4 Case study Leipzig – print-media analysis of city images

In order to determine which topics and words are discursively associated with the city of Leipzig on a regular basis, a collocation analysis was applied to identify all words that appeared significantly more often in articles on Leipzig than in those on the other cities (see above for details). Terms that were not relevant for the analysis (proper names, singular events) were deleted and the remaining words were summarized into thematic clusters. The result is shown in figure 2. The more frequent words appear within texts on Leipzig, the larger they are; proxim-

ity to the center indicates an increasing statistical significance (although all results depicted here are statistically significant).

The diagram shows that within the period of investigation, two topics were characteristic for media coverage on Leipzig, both showing high statistical significance and frequency within the graph. The first relates to the candidature of Leipzig as a venue for the Olympic Games 2012 and the Soccer World Cup 2006. For example the terms “Olympic” and “games” are highly specific for the Leipzig sub-corpus and thus situated in the very center of the graph; they also show a relatively high frequency within the texts, which is why they are depicted in

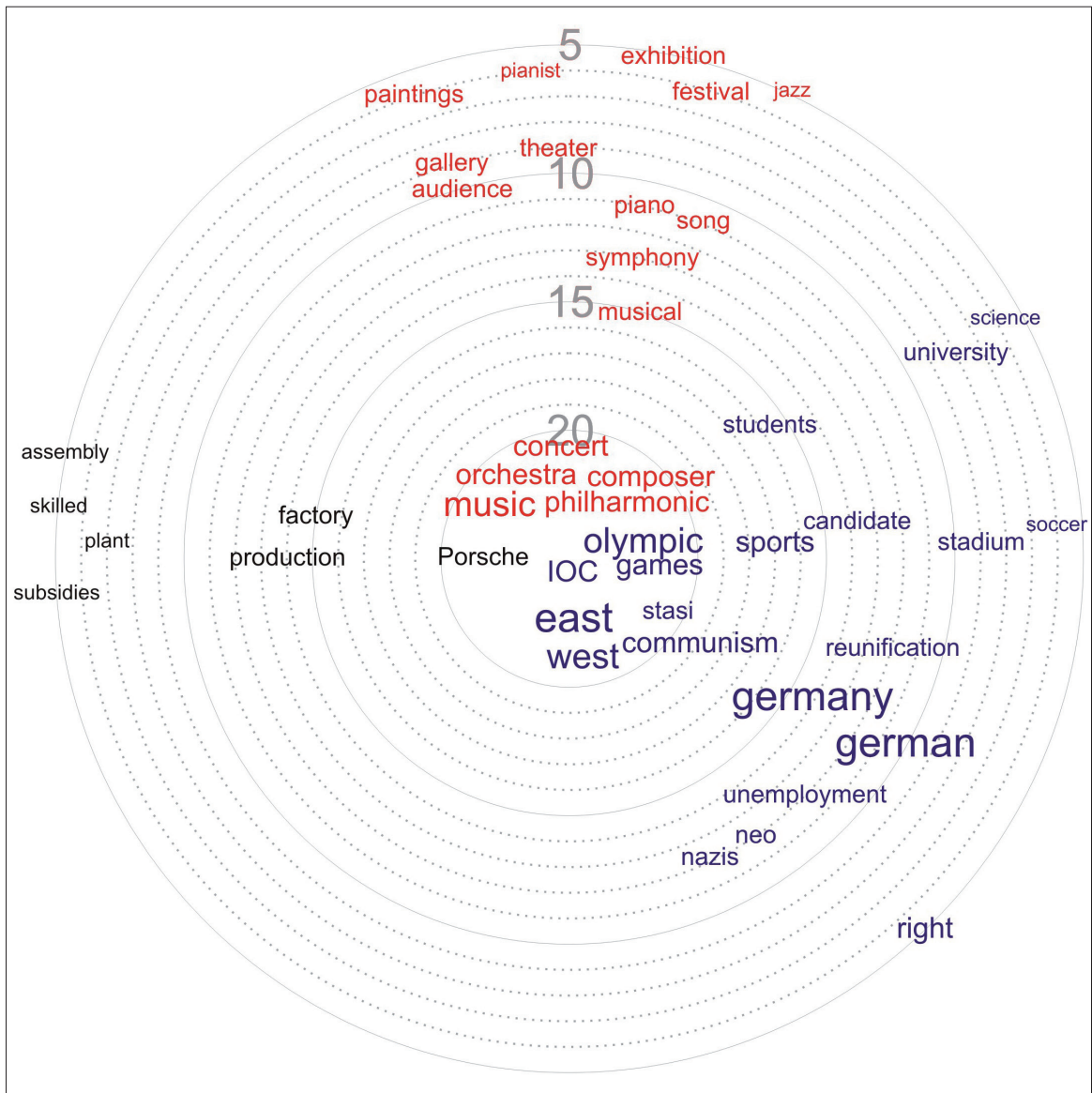


Fig. 2: Characteristic collocations with Leipzig

larger letters as, e.g., the terms “assembly”, “plant” or “subsidiaries”, which are less specific for and less frequent within texts on Leipzig. The second is the dichotomy between “East” and “West” and the location of Leipzig in Eastern Germany. Closely connected to the latter are references to the communist history of the city and reunification. Other social issues (on the lower right) are dominated by negatively connoted subjects such as unemployment and right-wing extremism. These topics are not usually only associated with Leipzig in particular, but with Eastern Germany in general, as will become clear below.

The economic realm is characterized by the spectacular industrial locations (in particular BMW, Porsche, DHL) of the last years which were met with extensive media coverage. Accordingly, economic topics are dominated by industrial production (“plant”, “factory” “production”) but the subsidies that have been paid in the process are also present.

Another important field present in the print-media articles is culture, most notably music (“concert”, “orchestra”, “musical”) and the performing arts. Culture is represented with relatively many entries within the lexicometric results. This may be due to the fact that the international media report from the perspective of German cities functioning as touristic destinations in the first instance (a comparison with a media analysis of German newspapers shows that in the latter, social as well as economic issues are relatively more important).

The quantitative analysis of Leipzig’s image allows a general overview of the topics and associations that are discursively connected to the city on a regular basis. But at the same time, its range of explanation is limited in the sense that it does not help to understand what these connections look like and whether positive or negative connotations are associated with them. It is also impossible to “read between the lines”, i.e., to also include meaning structures which do not show on the textual surface, the accumulation of certain expressions and words but are implicitly presupposed for the understanding of the text. The methods of enunciative analysis were used to address these questions.

Regarding the question of how Leipzig is discursively spatialized and the consequences of this spatialization, it becomes obvious that the relation to and location in Eastern Germany marks a recurrent theme of almost all texts and (although this cannot be documented here with singular examples) that it is usually linked to negatively connoted topics, e.g., the high rate of unemployment or right-

wing extremism. However, the relationship between Leipzig and East Germany is far from being univocal or one of simple equivalence (although this could have been expected on the basis of the lexicometric analysis). Rather, an interesting discursive field of tension is constituted between the poles of association and demarcation, in which the relationship between Leipzig and East Germany is negotiated in ever new, controversial and ambivalent ways.

For example, the city is often ascribed a leading role within the East, it is considered to be a role model for coping effectively with the transformation process, a “lighthouse” or a “boomtown of the East”. These forms of demarcation of Leipzig from the rest of Eastern Germany are shown exemplarily in the following quote, in which Marzin, the new manager of the Leipzig trade fair, describes the location of his new domain: “In his new office, furnished with a lot of glass and bright wood, Marzin, who originally comes from Munich, adjusts the coordinates of the Leipzig trade fair: ‘This is not Eastern Germany, we are a central location within Central Europe’” (SZ, 27.08.2005).⁹⁾

In the quote, an opposition between the new trade fair in Leipzig and East Germany in general is evoked by situating the declaration of Marzin within the spatial context of his glassy and nicely furnished office. The trade fair is represented on the one side as bright and modern and through the deictic expressions of “here” and “we”, identified as “the own”. On the other side, East Germany through the term “not” is demarcated and defined as “the other”. In doing so, the quote is based on a whole range of associations with East Germany that are presupposed knowledge of the reader: E.g. that East Germany is neither bright nor modern. It is only through this implicitly presumed prior knowledge of the reader that the opposition expressed by the polyphonic term “not” becomes meaningful.

However, despite this discursive demarcation, the statement also presupposes a voice which tacitly assumes that Leipzig belongs to the spatial category of “East Germany”, which is then vehemently rejected. Accordingly, within the short text passage a variety of voices are present, which describe the relationship of Leipzig to East Germany in different and ambivalent ways (Fig. 3).

⁹⁾ The SZ (Sueddeutsche Zeitung) is one of the leading German daily newspapers. The quote is taken from an analysis conducted on German print-media equivalent to the above described media analysis. The quotes were translated by the author.

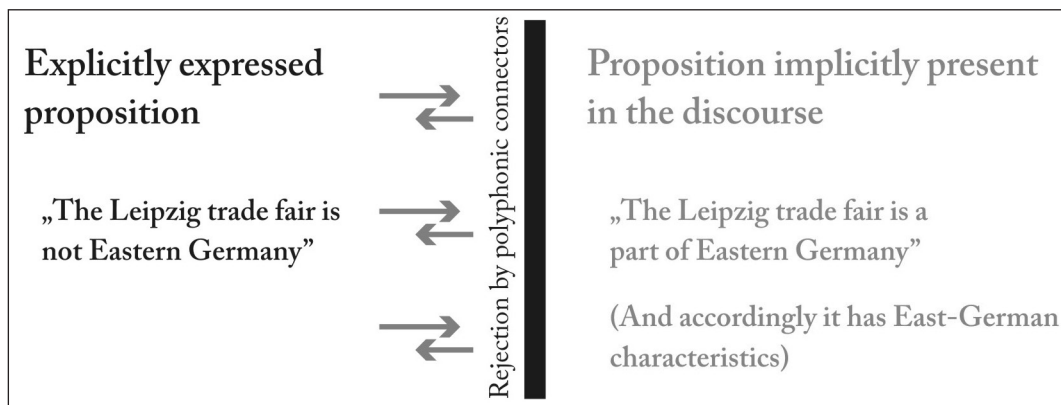


Fig. 3: Polyphony

The exceptional position of Leipzig vis-à-vis the representation of the problem-ridden East also becomes clear in the following quote, in which the “metropolis Leipzig” is praised as a “light-house of the eastern German economy” and thus contrasted with the “eastern demise”. It becomes obvious that Leipzig is set apart from the rest of the East, especially through the recent industrial locations of BMW, Porsche and DHL. *How exactly* the “rest” of the East is positioned becomes clear in the implicit presumption in the last sentence of the quote, where the statement presupposes the “eastern demise” as a given. “The small town of Delitzsch, with 27,000 inhabitants is situated only 10 minutes by car from the metropolis Leipzig and thus within the beam of light of the alleged lighthouse of the East German economy. Before turning to Delitzsch from the autobahn 14, the route passes symbols of hope: The futuristic glass palaces of Leipzig’s new trade fair, but above all the signs with the inscription ‘BMW construction site’ which lead to the most prestigious project in East Germany. Here something is happening, the signs indicate, no eastern demise!” (SZ, 10. 08.2002).

The term “alleged” reveals the ambivalence of the discursively constructed position of Leipzig, which at a second look is not as bright as the prestigious new buildings seem to suggest. Additionally and implicitly, the phrasing “alleged” refers to the presence of an opposing opinion on the economic position of Leipzig, which is characterized by a far more critical appraisal.

The micro-analysis of the texts, which could only be briefly outlined here, shows that the reporting on Leipzig is characterized largely by the location of the city in East Germany. Leipzig is caught in a “territorial trap” where the city is defined substantially by its relation to East Germany. This is

true in both cases where Leipzig is perceived as an East German city (i.e., through *association*) as well when its identity is constituted by *demarcation* from East Germany.¹⁰⁾

Moreover, the analysis of deictic and polyphonic expressions can be used to further specify this relationship of Leipzig and “the East” as one not simply of equivalence (Leipzig = Eastern Germany), but rather the relationship between Leipzig and the “New Laender” as permanently contested and continuously shaped in new and ambivalent ways. It is exactly the ambivalences of these processes of identity constitution and discursive attributions that reflect the power relations present in them. While East Germany is generally represented as problematic, the specific identity of Leipzig is formed exactly along the fluid border between “own” and “other” and between “belonging to” and demarcation from “the East”.

5 Conclusions

Discourse theories are currently among the most prominently discussed approaches for analyzing the social production of space in German-speaking human geography. Their main focus lies in addressing the relationship between knowledge and power as well as the question of how identities are constituted within discourses. The question of how these theoretical aspects can be implemented

¹⁰⁾ This general territorial logic also applies to other forms of identification such as, for example, in the quote on the Leipzig trade fair (see above), where Leipzig is discursively situated within Europe. The question of which “spatial container” the city is associated with decides which characteristics it will be associated with.

in empirical research marks one of the main threads within these debates. The critique of the conception of autonomous thinking and acting subjects especially requires a methodological and methodical proceeding which does not interpret the social structures of meaning as results of meaningful actions of individuals (as do hermeneutic approaches for example) but instead as ambiguous and fleeting results of symbolic relations. Particularly discussed is how both structuralist and poststructuralist aspects can be accounted for in the analysis.

Against this background, the article discusses the potential of the "French School of Discourse Analysis", which was developed in French linguistics. This approach combines lexicometric methods that analyze the characteristics of large text corpora with the help of quantitative, statistical procedures with techniques that address the micro-level of linguistic structures. The particular strength of this form of analysis is the concentration on the factual and observable features of texts and the attempt to approach the object of investigation without pre-existing hypotheses. This methodical proceeding shows in particular that geographical discourse analyses can profit from a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Together they are able to uncover and analyze a range of concepts that are problematized in discourse theories such as for example the constitution of spatial identities through demarcation or the inconsistencies and conflicts that are present within discourses.

The analysis of the discursive representations of Leipzig with the help of these methods was able to show which power effects and processes of identification are caused by certain linguistic depictions. The quantitative analysis was implemented to indicate the structural aspects of the discourse under examination (displaying words and themes that are related regularly to the city). Among other findings, it showed that the topic "Eastern Germany" still demands a prominent role in print-media articles on Leipzig. In the second step, an analysis of dominant enunciative structures was used to draw out the poststructuralist aspects of the discourse, in particular ambiguities and contradictions. It demonstrated that the relationships between Leipzig and East Germany and the resulting power and identity effects are subject to permanent processes of identification and demarcation. The power relations resulting from these discursive structures are predominantly caused by hegemonic associations with East Germany, which are – either

in the form of identification or demarcation – a consistent theme in the representations of Leipzig.

Beyond the case study of Leipzig, this paper offered a first insight into the potential of a post-structuralist perspective for geographical research questions. It made clear that this perspective opens new possibilities for the analysis of relations between space, identity and power which can be methodically grasped with the help of linguistic methods that address the factual observable characteristics of texts.

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